

Assembly Bill No. 7

CHAPTER 29

An act to add Section 37222.18 to the Education Code, and to add Section 6725 to the Government Code, relating to public schools.

[Approved by Governor June 30, 2015. Filed with
Secretary of State June 30, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 7, Bonta. Public schools: Larry Itliong Day.

Existing law requires the Governor to proclaim certain days each year for specified reasons. Existing law also designates particular days each year as having special significance in public schools and educational institutions and encourages those entities to conduct suitable commemorative exercises on those dates.

This bill would require the Governor to annually proclaim October 25 as Larry Itliong Day, would designate that date each year as having special significance in public schools and educational institutions, and would encourage those entities to observe that date by conducting exercises remembering the life of Larry Itliong and the contributions he made to the state.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Larry Itliong was a native of the Philippines and was born on October 25, 1913, in San Nicolas, Pangasinan.

(b) At 15 years of age with only a sixth grade education, Larry Itliong decided to seek out the land of "milk and honey" in order to pursue his studies, and moved to the United States of America in 1929. As a result of the Great Depression, Larry Itliong was forced to work on the railroads and then as a migrant farmworker traveling through Montana, South Dakota, Washington, and finally California. During that time, Larry Itliong learned of the plight suffered by Filipinos and other immigrants working as farm laborers.

(c) Larry Itliong was a prominent leader in one of the greatest social justice movements in the United States of America: the American farm labor movement. He organized a group of 1,500 Filipinos to strike against the grape growers of Delano, California, and continued on that strike for eight days while suffering through violence imposed by the growers' hired hands and the sheriff's department, and being thrown out of the labor camp.

(d) However, Larry Itliong remained tenacious and resilient, calling upon César Chávez and his followers to join forces with the Filipinos and strike together. Due partly as a result of Larry Itliong's persuasiveness, the two groups combined, establishing the United Farm Workers of America Organizing Committee of the AFL-CIO, which led to the United Farm Workers of America, one of the greatest unions in the history of the nation. The unification of farm labor workers of different ethnicities was unprecedented at that time, setting an example for future generations of workers and organizers and proving to be one of the reasons for the success of the movement.

(e) Larry Itliong moved on to become the President of the Filipino American Political Association, the first national political Filipino American organization and a crucial alliance between Filipino professionals and laborers that grew out of the Delano Grape Strike.

(f) Larry Itliong was also instrumental in the founding of the Pablo Agbayani Village, a retirement home built by volunteers for retired Filipino Manongs who no longer had families and needed a place to call home.

(g) Larry Itliong passed away in 1977 at the age of 63 leaving behind his wife and seven children.

(h) The accomplishments and contributions of Larry Itliong should be properly memorialized within the history and culture of the United States of America. Larry Itliong deserves proper recognition for his numerous sacrifices in the name of justice and the suppression of severely inadequate working conditions.

(i) Larry Itliong's legacy has been acknowledged in part in the renaming of a Union City middle school, formerly known as Alvarado Middle School. The middle school has been renamed Itliong-Vera Cruz Middle School in honor of the two labor movement heroes. It is the first school in the United States of America to be named after a Filipino American.

SEC. 2. Section 37222.18 is added to the Education Code, to read:

37222.18. (a) October 25 of each year is designated and set apart as Larry Itliong Day, a day having special significance pursuant to Section 37222.

(b) On Larry Itliong Day, all public schools and educational institutions are encouraged to conduct exercises remembering the life of Larry Itliong, recognizing his accomplishments, and familiarizing pupils with the contributions he made to this state.

SEC. 3. Section 6725 is added to the Government Code, to read:

6725. The Governor annually shall proclaim October 25 as Larry Itliong Day.